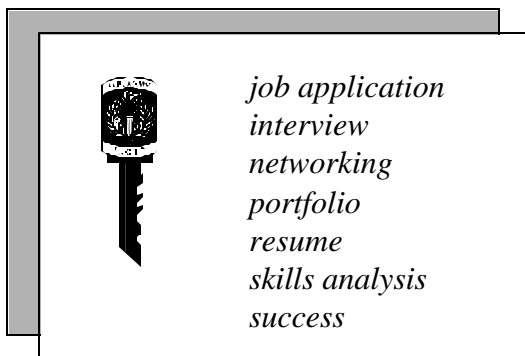


LESSON 2: CAREER DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO



INTRODUCTION

What do you want to become? What are you suited to do? What do you need to do to prepare? These questions and many more like them are what you must try to answer in order to prepare for your future. The better you prepare the better your chances of achieving **success**, and doing something that you enjoy. This lesson will focus on the career development **portfolio**, its importance, and its development and maintenance.

WHAT IS A CAREER PORTFOLIO

A portfolio is a file that contains an organized collection of your work based on your personality, goals, and aspirations. It provides insight and information on you and your achievements and growth over time. It presents an in-depth picture of a your skills and competencies. It also provides you a means to reflect on important areas of your life development and the impact of education on future lifestyle and career choices. It contains information that promotes what you want others, specifically future employers and schools, to know about you.

WHY CREATE A CAREER PORTFOLIO

There are many good reasons to create and maintain a career development portfolio. A portfolio is tailored to meet your needs and requirements. It serves as your record of achievement. It will:

- Serve as an on-going record of your completed work. Your portfolio will contain copies of good work from all of your classes, including information on projects in which you are involved that will be ongoing from year to year. It will provide you with a historical record that you can apply to other projects.
- Allow you to evaluate and see your improvement and growth, including how much you have done over the course of a nine-week period, semester or quarter, this year, or all the years of your high school experience.
- Serve as evidence of your accomplishments, even if you transfer from one school to another.
- Update your parents on your progress.
- Furnish you with a record of areas in your growth and development that may require additional work.
- Help you with the application process for future jobs and/or enrollment in colleges or universities.
- Prepare information for school and job **interviews**.

YOUR PERSONAL CAREER PORTFOLIO

The following information will show you how to create a career development portfolio that suits your own personality, goals, and aspirations. As you begin to use it, you

will be able to see how important pieces of your life fit together so that you can feel confident and optimistic about your future. During its development and use, we encourage you to talk with your parents, instructors, counselor, and other supportive people in your life. They can best advise you on the type of information that you should save in your portfolio information that promotes what you want others to know about you.

CREATING YOUR CAREER PORTFOLIO

By now, you may be able to pause and reflect on certain things you have learned, your likes and dislikes about them, your personality, your dreams for yourself, the things you wonder about, the things that frustrate you, and especially the things that you like most about yourself. Therefore, when creating your career development portfolio, apply these thoughts and reflections to the areas of:

- Self-knowledge/self-analysis.
- Your life roles.
- Past, present, and future educational development.
- Career exploration and planning.

If your school or JROTC unit has not chosen a specific portfolio, you can easily create your own using an ordinary file folder.

Place the information that is shown in the illustration below on the outside cover.

The headings on the files inside the sample folder below are just a few documents that you may want to place *now* in your portfolio. Then, as you progress through high school, there will be other documents that you should include in your portfolio, documents pertaining to job skills, work experiences, standardized exam results, **job applications**, **resumes**, college applications, financial aid forms, and self and **skills analyses**.

Although portfolios will vary based on the needs of the individual and the audience, there are some basic requirements to all portfolios. They are as follows:

- A personal cover page
- A table of contents
- A personal statement
- A resume
- Letters of reference — as many as possible
- Transcripts (optional)
- Samples of your school work from different subject areas to include why they are significant
- References and contact information

The illustration shows a sample portfolio folder with the following tabs visible from top to bottom:

- WORK EXPERIENCE
- VOLUNTEER WORK EXPERIENCE
- REFERENCES
- CAREER INFORMATION MATERIAL
- CAREER INTEREST SEARCHES
- CAREER PLANNER
- COMPETENCY EXAM RESULTS
- JOB APPLICATION
- RESUME
- COMPETENCIES EARNED IN VOCATIONAL CLASSES

The front cover of the folder contains the following fields:

- Social Security # (Optional) _____
- Age at Birth _____
- Driver's License # _____
- Graduation Date _____
- (Address) _____
- (Telephone #) _____

Your career development portfolio is still missing one essential element: an address book! The names, addresses, and phone numbers found in an address book represent the contacts that a person makes and develops over many years of **networking**. Fellow JROTC cadets, other classmates, teammates, your parents' friends, your friends' parents, people met at camp, church, or acquaintances made while traveling are contacts that may become an important part of your future. They may be future clients, customers, colleagues, or employers.

EVALUATING YOUR CAREER PORTFOLIO

A portfolio is not complete unless you evaluate it thoroughly. Remember that the portfolio represents you. So, here are some questions you should ask yourself to ensure that you have developed a quality product.

- Are the required documents included?
- Have you edited it to make sure that there are no errors?
- Is the portfolio neat and organized?
- Is the portfolio labeled properly?
- Is it pleasing to the eye?
- Does it represent you as a person?

MAINTAINING YOUR CAREER PORTFOLIO

You should review the information in your portfolio at least three times per year and remove anything that is outdated. Your objective is to keep your career development portfolio as responsive to your future needs and interests as possible. This portfolio should be the best record of your school and work accomplishments.

CONCLUSION

If you have not already started on a career development portfolio before this school year, start now! Create a portfolio that is responsive to your future needs and interests. To be complete, it should contain documentation on your goals; educational development; career exploration; and planning; and self-analysis.

Start today by planning what you want to accomplish along with the how and when you can complete it. Use a portfolio to organize your school accomplishments and career planning and to help you achieve success.